

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6191

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SUBJECT: REORGANIZATION OF FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY

SUMMARY: THE REORGANIZATION OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY IS NOW THE SUBJECT OF A DECISION MEMORANDUM SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT. HE HAS SELECTED THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS. THE SECRETARY GENERAL POSITION WILL REMAIN AS THE QUAI'S HIGHEST RANKING CAREER JOB, BUT WITH A REVISED FUNCTION. THE SECRETARY GENERAL WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES. INSTEAD HE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF POLICY PLANNING, WHICH WILL HAVE AN ENHANCED ROLE, WILL UNDERTAKE HIGH-LEVEL MISSIONS ABROAD, WILL RECEIVE HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS TO FRANCE, AND WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MINISTRY AND THE FRENCH FOREIGN SERVICE. THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES WILL INCREASE THEIR POWERS BY ASSUMING COMPETENCE FOR ALL BILATERAL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL MATTERS, THEREBY REDUCING THE AUTHORITY OF THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIRECTORATES WHICH WILL HENCEFORTH BE LIMITED TO MULTILATERAL MATTERS. THE POLITICAL DIRECTOR WILL ALSO NO LONGER HAVE A SUPERVISORY ROLE OVER THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES, BUT HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST SENSITIVE HIGH-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS ESPECIALLY WITH THE EC-9 AND THE USA. THE

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NEW SYSTEM BEARS THE IMPRINT OF ELYSEE SECRETARY GENERAL

FRANCOIS-PONCET. END SUMMARY.

1. ON OCTOBER 13 FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD INFORMED THE FRENCH CABINET OF PLANS TO REORGANIZE THE STRUCTURES OF THE QUAI D'ORSAY. THE CHANGES REVEAL A DESIRE TO ENHANCE THE ROLE OF POLICY PLANNING, TO STREAMLINE THE PAPERFLOW SYSTEM BY ELIMINATING LAYERING, TO FOCUS THE ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN POLICY ALONG GEOGRAPHIC RATHER THAN FUNCTIONAL LINES, AND TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF THE MINISTRY IN THE OVERALL GOVERNMENTAL COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES.

2. ROLE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL: THE MAJOR DEBATE IN THE PLANNING STAGE OF THE REORGANIZATION CONCERNED THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL. THE OPTIONS WERE TO ABOLISH THE JOB, MAINTAIN IT WITH NO CHANGE, OR TRANSFORM IT. GISCARD CHOSE THE LATTER. THE SECRETARY GENERAL WILL HENCEFORTH BE REMOVED FROM THE DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AND FUNCTIONAL DIRECTORATES WHICH WILL REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER. INSTEAD HE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF POLICY PLANNING WHICH WILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF QUAI OPERATIONS, WITH POLICY PLANNING STAFF (CAP) BECOMING MORE INTIMATELY INVOLVED WITH CURRENT PROBLEMS. HE WILL ALSO BE SENT ON HIGH-LEVEL MISSIONS ABROAD, AND WILL RECEIVE IMPORTANT VISITORS. IT IS ALSO EXPECTED THAT HE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF AN EXPANDED DIALOGUE WITH FOREIGN AMBASSADORS RESIDENT IN PARIS. FINALLY, HE WILL TAKE FULL CHARGE OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE FOREIGN SERVICE, AN AREA THAT HAS SUFFERED FROM HIGH-LEVEL NEGLECT UNDER JOBERT AND SAUVAGNARGUES.

3. GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES: THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORS WILL HAVE THEIR POWERS ENHANCED IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, THEY WILL ASSUME COMPETENCE FOR ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BILATERAL MATTERS IN ADDITION TO POLITICAL BILATERAL MATTERS. ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL MATTERS, EVEN WHEN PURELY BILATERAL, HAVE BEEN HANDLED BY THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIRECTORATES. SECONDLY, THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES WILL HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TORS WILL REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ELIMINATING THE LAYERS OF THE FUNCTIONAL DIRECTORS GENERAL (POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL) AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL. THE COMMITTEE WHICH PREPARED THE OPTIONS PAPER WAS UNANIMOUS IN THE FEELING THAT THE MOVEMENT OF STAFF STUDIES IS MUCH TOO SLOW FOR EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION.

4. THE FUNCTIONAL DIRECTORATES: THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIRECTORS WILL HENCEFORTH BE LIMITED TO SUPERVISION OF MULTILATERAL MATTERS WHICH ARE NOT CLEARLY WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTORATES.

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TORATES. HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL DIRECT WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST SENSITIVE PROBLEMS AND NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING RELATIONS WITH THE EC-9, THE FRG, THE UK, THE USA AND THE USSR, WHETHER THEY COME UP IN A BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL CONTEXT.

5. PERSONALITIES: ACCORDING TO WELL FOUNDED RUMORS, THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL WILL BE JEAN-MARIE SOUTOU, AMBASSADOR TO THE EC-9 WHO WAS RECENTLY AWARDED THE TITLE OF AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE. IT IS ALSO BELIEVED THAT DE LABOULAYE WILL REMAIN POLITICAL DIRECTOR WITH THE SAME MAJOR ROLE AS AT PRESENT. ALTHOUGH HE ASPIRES TO THE WASHINGTON EMBASSY, HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE ELYSEE TO RUN FOR PARLIAMENT IN 1978 ON THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY TICKET FROM A NORMANDY CONSTITUENCY.

6. CONCLUSIONS: THE LIKELY SELECTION OF SOUTOU AS

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROLE OF
POLICY PLANNING IN MINISTRY OPERATIONS REFLECT THE
GROWING POWER OF ELYSEE SECRETARY GENERAL FRANCOIS-PONCET.
HE AND SOUTOU TRAVERSED THE DESERT TOGETHER UNDER
DEGAULLE, AND THEY ARE BOTH ARDENT EUROPEANISTS. FROM
THE INSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL CAREER SERVICE, SOUTOU
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IS PROBABLY THE CAREER FSO WITH THE MOST PRESTIGE.
HIS NOMINATION SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD REVERSING
THE DECLINE IN FOREIGN SERVICE MORALE. FRANCOIS-PONCET
IS ALSO AN ADVOCATE OF POLICY PLANNING AND IMPROVED
COORDINATION OF INTERMINISTERIAL WORK ON NATIONAL
SECURITY WHICH IS NOW DIVIDED UNNATURALLY BETWEEN THE
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THE PRESIDENCY.

7. THE REORGANIZATION OF THE STRUCTURES OF THE FOR-
EIGN MINISTRY TENDS TO REFLECT THE DE FACTO POWER
SITUATION IN THE QUAI D'ORSAY. FORMER SECRETARY GEN-
ERAL DE COURCEL TENDED TO BE BYPASSED BY HIS SUPERIORS,
AND THE DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC
DIRECTORATES WAS PROVIDED BY MAURICE ULRICH, THE
DIRECTOR OF CABINET TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER. UNDER THE
NEW SYSTEM, THIS DE FACTO POWER OF THE DIRECTOR OF
CABINET OVER DAILY OPERATIONS WILL BE FORMALIZED.
POLITICAL DIRECTOR DE LABOULAYE WILL CONTINUE TO
EXERCISE THE SAME POWERS AS BEFORE DESPITE THE FACT
THAT HE WILL NO LONGER SIGN OFF ON STAFF STUDIES GOING
FROM THE GEOGRAPHIC DESKS TO THE MINISTER. IN EFFECT,
HIS ROLE WILL DEPEND ON THE SENSITIVE ASSIGNMENTS HE IS
GIVEN BY THE MINISTER AND THE ELYSEE, WHICH IS ESSEN-
Tially THE CURRENT SITUATION. HE WILL ALSO HAVE
DIRECT SUPERVISION OVER THE PACTS AND DISARMAMENTS AND
THE UNITED NATIONS DIRECTORATES, BOTH OF WHICH GET A
LOT OF IMPORTANT DAY-TO-DAY ACTION.

8. THE MAIN LOSERS IN THIS REORGANIZATION ARE LIKELY
TO BE THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIRECTORS GENERAL WHO
WILL LOSE AUTHORITY OVER DOSSIERS THAT CAN BE HANDLED
SOLELY WITHIN GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS. THE CULTURAL DIREC-
TORATE WILL SUFFER A FURTHER LOSS BY THE SWITCH OF
ATOMIC ENERGY MATTERS FROM CULTURAL TO ECONOMIC.

9. IN THE MEDIUM TERM, THE MAIN AXIS OF BUREAUCRATIC
POWER IS LIKELY TO SHIFT AS A REFLECTION OF THE KEY
PERSONALITIES. UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, THE MAIN
LINES WERE FROM PIERRE-BROSSOLETTE IN THE ELYSEE TO
ULRICH AND DE LABOULAYE IN THE QUAI. OVER THE NEXT
YEAR, WE FORESEE THE MAIN LINE RUNNING FROM FRANCOIS
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PONCET IN THE ELYSEE TO SOUTOU AND DE MONTBRIAL, THE
DIRECTOR OF THE POLICY PLANNING STAFF, WITH DE LABOU-
LAYE AND ULRICH CONTINUING TO PLAY KEY SUPERVISORY
ROLES, BUT WITH SLIGHTLY LESS INFLUENCE ON THE HIGHEST
LEVEL.
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